

# OPRA FRIDAY FIVE

News, Resources and Events for OPRA Members

JULY 16, 2021

**Workforce Crisis Task Force:** The WCTF met this week to review the 'hot spot' data collected over the past weeks to help determine where further intervention may be needed to support the areas where providers especially struggling with workforce. The data presentation, [which can be accessed by clicking here](#), seems to indicate there are 27 counties that are being considered 'hot spots' where the crisis has hit emergency levels. DODD and system partners plan to take a more 'hands on approach', visiting with identified counties and providers to better understand the nature and true impact of the workforce shortage. The task force will also be looking at a variety of proposals that came from WCTF members. We submitted several recommendations and worked with our partners at OHCA and OWN to organize the discussion around DSP compensation and how we can impact this very important issue. The task force has begun reviewing these proposals and will be setting priorities. Please contact [Pete](#) with any questions about the WCTF.

**Feedback on Draft Rules:** Following the end of Ohio's State of Emergency last month, DODD drafted rules intended to make some of the pandemic-era policies in effect permanently. On Monday, [OPRA submitted feedback to DODD and Ohio's Common Sense Initiative](#) on the adverse impacts of some of the proposed changes on the rules regarding 'STEP'-type services. While the draft rules do allow for a daily 'acuity C' rate for small-group community services, they revert group sizes from 5 to 4 individuals, as well as not including language allowing center 'drop-ins' to accommodate individual needs when served in the community. Discussions on these items this week have been largely positive and DODD is convening the 'core committee' to meet next week to hopefully resolve the lingering issues with these draft rules. Please contact [Scott](#) with any questions.

**Federal Legislation:** There are a number of bills that have been introduced or working through the US Congress intended to support disability services and address some of the direct care workforce challenges on the Federal level. Advocacy with our Federal partners has consistently pointed to the need to address the workforce in any I/DD or HCBS-focused legislation and we hope these pieces of legislation have done more to address workforce than previously introduced bills. We will continue to work with ANCOR and our Federal partners as these bills progress towards potential passage.

**Budget Reconciliation Package:** The US Senate released its outline of a [\\$3.5 Trillion budget reconciliation package](#) intended to address 'human infrastructure' proposals not addressed in the Bipartisan Infrastructure framework.

**Better Care Better Jobs Act:** The House of Representatives' [plan to invest \\$400 Billion into HCBS services](#) primarily through a permanent 10% increase the FMAP, in order to innovate and expand waiver services and address workforce challenges.

**Supporting our Direct Care Workforce Act:** Introduced by Senator Tim Kaine, [this bill would invest \\$1 Billion into grants for direct support workforce training initiatives](#), as well as a national Technical Assistance Center for advancing best practices in the recruitment and retention of DSPs.

**Recognizing the Role of Direct Support Professionals Act:** The reintroduction of legislation to [create an occupational classification for DSPs](#) within the Office of Budget Management in order to better collect data and recognize workforce trends for federal support.



# In Case You Missed It...

Additional Updates From The OPRA Team and System Partners

**Memo Monday:** This week's MM contained a number of updates that we discussed on this morning's call, including updated information on the launch of the provider call-center, the next frontline forum meeting and the statewide behavioral support workshop. [To read Memo Monday, click here.](#)

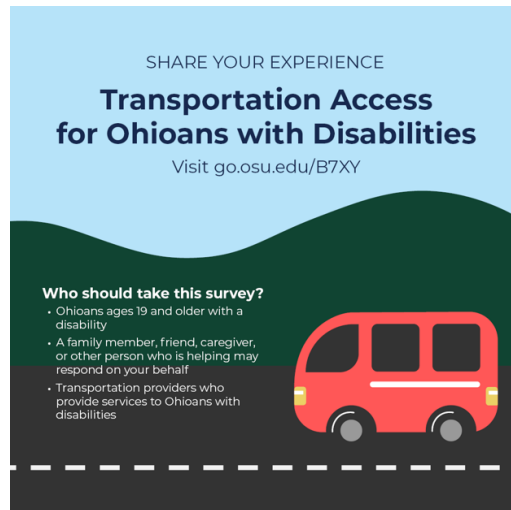
**CMS call –** OPRA participated in this week's CMS stakeholder call, focused mostly on the responses regarding the vaccination/education/training rule we recently submitted feedback on. We remained concerned about the possibility of CMS requiring the use of the NHSN to collect data for ICFs, which we will continue to advocate against due to the significant burden this would put on providers. The meeting also focused on the exacerbating workforce crisis and the challenge of the OSHA ETS released weeks back.

**Day & Employment Committee:** Thanks to everyone who attended our joint Day & Employment services committee. Special thanks to our guests Alissa Otani-Cole from OOD and Keith Banner from DODD, as well as Al Fahimi and Jordon Jakacki from Arnet Technologies for their timely presentation on the 'cybersecurity framework'. [To access the recording of yesterday's meeting, click here.](#)



**Americans with Disabilities Act**  
Celebrate the ADA! July 26, 2021

**ADA Anniversary:** The Americans with Disabilities Act turns 31 this year on July 26th, 2021. [Click here to learn more about the ADA and for a library of resources to help celebrate the historic legislation.](#)



## Upcoming Events

[7/21: OPRA Policy Committee Meeting](#)

[7/22: DODD Technology Summit](#)

## News and Resources

["Coronavirus in Ohio Thursday update: 547 new cases in 24 hours"](#)

["Ohio to unveil 2nd COVID vaccination incentive program"](#)

["Person-Centered Approach Key to Supporting People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities"](#)

["Study documents valuable contributions of employees with intellectual and development disabilities amid COVID-19"](#)

